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## Message from the Mayor

In the past few weeks, we've seen some interesting news on education in the District of Columbia—including recognition of our efforts in a variety of ways.

On April 20, one of our city's public school teachers—Jason Kamras—was honored as National Teacher of the Year in an historic ceremony in the White House Rose Garden with President Bush. Jason Kamras, who teaches math at John Philip Sousa Middle School, has been known to say of teaching: "Nothing surpasses the joy I feel when a student proclaims proudly, 'Mr. Kamras, now I get it.'"

As Mayor of the District, I'm incredibly proud of Jason and so many of his fellow teachers in schools across our city—public, public charter and private. When I think of the passion that our educators put into their work every day, I'm reminded of an adage that remains true today, "No matter what you do, teachers work harder than you do."

Earlier this month, on April 12, one of the nation's most famous former teachers, First Lady Laura Bush, joined us at Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, where she read excerpts from *The Enormous Egg* by Oliver Butterworth to students from Maury Elementary School in Northeast. She brought along a surprise guest, her dog, "Miss Beazley," who is named after a character in the book.

Like the First Lady, who also attended the Rose Garden ceremony honoring Jason Kamras, I'm passionate about education, libraries and books. I hope my recently-formed Blue Ribbon Commission on the future of our city's libraries will help transform our public libraries into a state-of-the-art library system with innovative programs and technology. I look forward to the First Lady's continued support and input in our efforts.

Finally, on April 20, I joined DC Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Clifford B. Janey to honor 18 eighth-grade graduates of the innovative Dell TechKnow Program. This novel program is a partnership between the District of Columbia Office of the Chief Technology Officer, DC Public Schools and Dell to help close the technology gap for low-income and at-risk students in the DC area.

The program is a 40-hour, self-paced course that teaches students to, among other things, disassemble and assemble a computer; upgrade computer hardware; use the Internet and make presentations. All 18 graduates earned a personal computer, operating system, software and one year of free Internet access—donated by America Online—in return for a commitment to maintain good grades and attendance.

This program is a tremendous opportunity for our students to learn essential skills they will need to succeed in today's technology-driven world. What we're seeing today are the practical benefits of establishing the McKinley Technology High School and the powerful results of public-private partnerships.

Sometimes, improving education means thinking of new and innovative ways to teach our children. And recently, we've been showing how we can make that happen.



## AGENCY WEBSITES

Office of Tax and  
Revenue

Department of Parks and  
Recreation

Department of  
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police  
Department

Office of Boards and  
Commissions

Commission on the Arts  
and Humanities

Department of Human  
Services

## LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and  
Tourism

DC Public Library

# District Receives Recognition from Harvard University

Last week, the Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit and the District's SEED School were recognized by Harvard University as two of the country's most unique and innovative government programs. This recognition marks the first time any District program has been singled out by Harvard University for this award.

The two District government programs were named finalists for the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award, a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Six winners will be chosen from among 18 finalists, and each winner will be eligible for a \$100,000 award in what is often called the "Oscars" of government.

It is very gratifying that two creative and unique programs in the District are being recognized on a national level for the service they provide to the citizens of our city. These nominations should give District residents renewed confidence in the quality of our city's programs and employees.

The two finalists from our city were selected from more than 1,000 applicants:

- Metropolitan Police Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit—the only unit in the nation to redefine community policing by coupling outreach with traditional crime fighting. The unit investigates crimes by and against the gay community, and educates and supports community members and police.
- SEED School of the DC Public Schools—the nation's first urban public boarding school, providing integrated academic and boarding services to help students in grades seven through 12 achieve their academic and social potential.

Each of the 18 finalists will deliver a public presentation before the National Selection Committee at Harvard University on May 11. After a full day of presentations, the committee will select five winners of the Innovations in American Government Award and one winner of the Fannie Mae Foundation Innovations in American Government Award in Affordable Housing, a special award made possible by the Fannie Mae Foundation.

Winners will be announced on July 27 at the 2005 Excellence in Government Conference in Washington, DC. Each winning program will receive a \$100,000 grant to encourage replication of its innovation in other jurisdictions.

For more information on the Innovations in American Government program and this year's finalists, please visit [www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu](http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu) or [www.excelgov.org](http://www.excelgov.org).

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Summit

Tomorrow, Saturday, April 30, our city will hold its first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Citizen Summit. The summit will take place from 8 am to 4 pm at the Greenleaf Recreation Center—at First and M Streets, SW.

This innovative summit builds on the success of our past Citizen Summits, which have drawn more than 10,000 residents. The LGBT Citizen Summit will stimulate honest dialogue about critical issues facing the District's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. The Summit also honors the memory of my colleague and friend Wanda Alston, who dedicated her life to advocating for the rights of others.

As Mayor, I am deeply committed to ensuring that the District government works effectively for every citizen in every ward. Mayor's Order 2004-148 established the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs, ensuring issues affecting the LGBT community are addressed. I identified five key priorities to focus on during the Summit to help make the vision of a stronger District of Columbia a reality. The priorities as they relate to the LGBT community are:

- Youth Challenges
- Business Development
- Health
- Public Safety
- Making Government Work for All

Residents can register online at [citizensummit.dc.gov](http://citizensummit.dc.gov)—or by contacting our Office of Community Affairs at (202) 727-3000.



## Danbury Station Groundbreaking

On April 19, I attended a groundbreaking ceremony for Danbury Station, a townhouse development slated to feature 119 townhouse units at Danbury and South Capitol Streets, SW, in Ward 8. The development is a public/private partnership between the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and Centex Homes. DHCD worked with Centex to leverage 24 of the 119 townhomes as affordable.

There's reason to celebrate our housing development in Ward 8—and across the District. I'm thrilled to say we're building on our success downtown and taking economic development into neighborhoods across the city.

We've got 30,000 units of housing either in production or in the pipeline, half of them affordable. We're leading the country in Hope VI housing awards from the federal government. We launched the Comprehensive Housing Task Force and it's giving us an assessment of what our real needs are, what the market conditions are, and what the role of "inclusionary zoning" should be. And we're working on public-private partnerships, such as the one between our Department of Housing and Community Development and Centex Homes.

In the end, I'm deeply committed to two key economic development priorities:

- Creating opportunity for all through neighborhood-based economic development—that means connecting communities with the economic opportunity that suits them best
- And attracting 100,000 new residents by providing the lifestyle amenities that you can't find anywhere else

I'm also proud that the Bellevue neighborhood is on the cusp of an exciting resurgence. That resurgence will be the result of a partnership among government, the private sector, non-profits and the community.

Government's contributions include the development of a new Washington Highlands Branch Library and improved streetscapes for the area. I believe the Danbury Station townhomes will spark homeownership in the area and create a diverse, mixed-income community.

Finally, I think our goal is simple: We must keep our affordable housing stock growing as our city's population grows. As it grows, we will support future homeowners with financial assistance and community programming.

## Traffic Signal Successes in the District

Last week, the National Transportation Operations Coalition released its first National Report Card on Traffic Signal Operations. The District Department of Transportation achieved a grade of "B," compared to the national grade of "D-."

We have a total of 1,530 traffic signals in the nation's capital which means we still have more politicians than traffic signals, but it's a close call. We realize, however, that when our traffic signals run smoothly, our city runs smoothly.

We received a good grade even though the District still uses an older style pre-timed system. Our high grade demonstrates our proactive management and investments in regular signal timing updates as often as once a month. Also, we believe it's important to keep signals updated for special events, for example around RFK stadium for the Washington Nationals games.

We've found that centralized control of traffic from the District's Transportation Management Center in the Reeves Municipal Building is a true asset. Roads are monitored there with more than 100 cameras and road volume detectors 24 hours a day. The Center can make timing changes at any signal, and dispatch maintenance crews and Roadway Operation Patrol units for assistance if needed.

We are updating our traffic signals and timing to improve traffic flow and lessen congestion. As president of the National League of Cities, I urge mayors in other cities to do the same. We invest in our traffic signal system because we know it paves the way to continued success. If people can't get from one end of a city to another, they probably won't do business in that city. Our economic base depends on smooth commutes.

It doesn't matter where you live in this nation. Effective, operating traffic signals serve all of us to relieve congestion and improve air quality.



## District Activities



Mayor Williams and Councilmember Vincent Orange ride in a horse drawn carriage along Pennsylvania Avenue during the Emancipation Day parade April 16.



Mayor Williams tips his hat along with Councilmembers and representatives from the DC Sports Commission at the home opener for the Washington Nationals—the first Major League Baseball game in the District in 34 years.



Mayor Williams meets with Ballou Senior High School students to discuss ways to encourage DC teens to stay safe after dark and to stress the importance of the District's curfew law. After talking with students, the Mayor held his weekly press briefing at the school.



Mayor Williams shakes hands with Hernando Sierra Porto, General Secretary Mayor of Cartagena, while Apolinar Salcedo Caicedo, Mayor of Cali, and President of Amunafro looks on.

## Community News

- [Mayor Announces Head of State Education Office](#)
- [Mayor Releases Statement on Apprehension of Serial Arsonist](#)
- [Mayor Williams Expresses Support for Department of the Environment](#)

[View All News Releases](#)

## Upcoming Events

4/30	<b>LGBT Citizen Summit</b> ( <a href="http://www.citizensummit.dc.gov">www.citizensummit.dc.gov</a> ) 8 am – 4 pm Greenleaf Recreation Center First and M Streets, SW <b>Contact:</b> (202) 727-3000
4/30	<b>Whitehurst Freeway Deconstruction Meeting</b> 10 am – 2 pm Palisades Neighborhood Library 4901 V Street, NW (at MacArthur Boulevard)
5/1	<b>42nd Annual Market Day Festival</b> 11 am – 6 pm Eastern Market 7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE <b>Contact:</b> (202) 675-9050
5/7	<b>Child Safety Seat Checks by DC Fire and EMS</b> 11 am – 3 pm Engine Company 33 101 Atlantic Street SE <b>Contact:</b> (202) 727-1778

